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ABSTRACT

A survey instrument developed to determine opinions of various groups on aspects of social policy and day care services was distributed among individuals involved in various ways with day care. The 42-item questionnaire used a Likert-type opinion scale to measure attitudes on: (1) aims and requirements of day care programs; (2) use of public funds; (3) regulation of day care; (4) rights and responsibilities of parents; and (5) day care for the economically disadvantaged. Responses from 225 individuals were tabulated and analyzed, with respondents categorized into the following seven groups: independent providers; federally-funded providers; other non-profit providers; state licensing representatives; state agency social services personnel; advocacy and college personnel; and parents. Data from each of these seven groups were compiled and tabulated according to the number strongly agreeing, agreeing, not sure, disagreeing and strongly disagreeing with each item on the survey. Results are summarized and tables are included. (BF)

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OPINIONS ON DAY CARE AND SOCIAL POLICY[1]

I. Introduction

The Southwest Federal Regional Child Development Task Force, through its Steering Committee[2] on studies dealing with the role of the federal and state governments in day care, instigated the development of a questionnaire and a study to deal with social policy.

II. Development of the Instrument

In the development of the survey instrument, we wished to determine opinions on various aspects of social policy dealing with day care and pertinent issues. We wished to determine the opinions of various groups on aims and requirements of day care programs, how public monies should be spent, the regulation of day care, federal regulations, and the rights and responsibilities of parents. Because of time and cost restraints, we decided to limit the number of items on the survey. The initial questionnaire consisted of 41 items with an additional item being added when it was reprinted. A Likert type scale was used to solicit responses to each statement. Thus to each item such as "All parents should have freedom of choice in child caring arrangements," the respondent was asked to indicate his opinion by marking one of the following five choices: "strongly agree", "agree", "not sure", "disagree", or "strongly disagree". A second portion of the survey instrument asked each individual to provide information so that we might categorize each respondent in some sort of a group for analysis. We asked individuals to indicate their home city and state, whether they were provider of a service, parent of a day care child, state licensing employee, etc., their approximate family income, and the highest education.

III. Administration of the Survey Instrument

The survey instrument was passed out at various conferences such as state associations for the education of young children, children under six, and day care associations. Members of the Southwest Federal Regional Child Development Task Force also disseminated the questionnaires among their colleagues and employees. Most questionnaires were returned by mail.

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[1] Dr. John W. Hollomon, President of the National Association of Child Care Administrators and Associate Professor at the University of Texas at San Antonio, and Dr. Michael A. Zaccaria, Executive Director of the Alliance of Child Development Associations, were responsible for the development of the questionnaire, analyses of the results, and the writing of this report. Professor Allee Mitchell of Texas Southern University served as project coordinator.

[2] Members of the Steering Committee were Ruth Hubbard of the Louisiana Office of Early Childhood, chairperson; Lu Sager, a member of the Social Services staff of the Veterans Administration Hospital at North Little Rock, Arkansas; James Bohanon, Supervisor of Oklahoma State Licensing for Day Care; Mozell Houser, an independent day care provider from Oklahoma City; Jeannette Watson, Director of Early Childhood Development Division of the Texas Department of Community Affairs; and Bill Baca of the Children and Youth Committee for the State of New Mexico.

Sample

A total of 225 of some 3,000 questionnaires distributed were returned in time to be used for our analyses. They were categorized into groups as follows with the numbers indicated:

Independent providers	23
Federally funded providers	21
Other non-profit providers	40
State licensing representatives	49
State agency social services personnel	40
Advocacy/college personnel	23
Parents	29
Total	225

IV. Demographic Data on Each Sample

Independent Providers of Child Care Services

Of the 23 independent providers, ten were from Texas, three from Oklahoma, two from Louisiana and the other unspecified. Fourteen were directors, three were teachers, with 15 owners or part owners. Three indicated family incomes of from $6,000 to $12,000; eight from $12,000 to $18,000; and nine of over $18,000. Three indicated high school or equivalency, five some college, one associate degree, six bachelor's degrees, five master's degrees and one a doctoral degree. Most of the degrees were in a related area such as psychology, sociology, home economics, social work or education.

Federally-funded Providers

Of the 21 federally funded providers, at least six were from Oklahoma, ten from Texas and one from Louisiana. One was a provider in a family day care home, one in a group day care home, ten represented Head Start, one public school, one church operated and four, Title XX type centers. Two indicated their positions as directors, one as supervisor, eight as teachers or workers and one as cook. Five reported a family income of under $6,000, six as between $6,000 and $12,000, and three as between $12,000 and $18,000. One indicated an elementary education, two a high school education or equivalent, six some college, two associate degrees, and one each for bachelor, master's and doctoral degrees.

Other Non-profit Providers

Of the 40 other non-profit providers, 17 were from Texas with one each from Oklahoma, New Jersey, Montana and Michigan. Of this group two indicated centers in public schools, six in churches and 19 in other non-profit facilities. Ten were directors, three were head teachers, two were supervisors, nine were teachers or workers; five indicated they were training providers. Eight indicated family incomes of $6,000 to $12,000, four of $12,000 to $18,000 and 24 of $18,000 or more. Three indicated some college, three associate degrees, ten bachelor's degrees, eight master's degrees and two doctoral degrees.

Licensing Representatives

Of the licensing representatives 31 were from Texas, seven from Oklahoma, and one from Louisiana. Four of them indicated they were parents of children in day care centers. Six of these were concerned with the development of policies, regulations and standards while 40 involved licensing and inspection of facilities. Four indicated family incomes of $6,000 to $12,000, 20 of $12,000 to $18,000, and 23 of over $18,000. Thirty-four had bachelor's degrees while 15 had master's degrees. Degrees appeared to be predominantly in the social studies such as sociology, psychology, social work and education.

State Agency Social Services Personnel

At least 24 of the 40 in this category were from Texas, and at least two were from Oklahoma. Four were parents of children in family day care homes and three in day care centers. Twenty-two indicated their role as purchasers of services, six as developers of policy, regulations and standards, and 15 as trainers of providers. Four indicated family incomes of $6,000 to $12,000, 14 of $12,000 to $18,000, twenty of over $18,000. One indicated some college, 18 a bachelor's degree, 14 a master's degree, while 5 had doctoral degrees.

Advocacy/College Personnel

Of the 23 that we classified as advocacy or college personnel, at least three were from Oklahoma and at least 13 were from Texas. One member was a parent of a child in a family day home while three were parents of children in day care centers. Thirteen indicated they were trainers of providers, educators, or professors. Two had family incomes of $6,000 to $12,000, six of $12,000 to $18,000 and 11 of over $18,000. One had some college, three had bachelor's degrees, eight had master's degrees while four had doctoral degrees.

Parents

Of the 29 parents at least four were from Oklahoma, 13 from Texas, and one from Louisiana. Three had children in family day care homes, three in group day care homes and 23 in day care centers with four children in Head Start, four in church operated centers, three in other non-profit centers and 12 in independent centers. One of these parents was a center director and another an owner or part owner. One reported income of under $6,000, two of $6,000 to $12,000, ten of $12,000 to $18,000 and nine of over $18,000. Two were high school graduates or equivalent, three had some college, one had an associate degree, 11 had bachelor's degrees while five had master's degrees.

V. Analysis of Data and Results

Any time that one deals with research on opinions and social policies some questions are raised as to whether a statement should not have been phrased differently. Some question is also raised in terms of what an individual meant when the individual made a certain response to a question. Data on each of the seven groups enumerated above were compiled and tabulated in accordance with the number strongly agreeing, agreeing, not sure, disagreeing and strongly disagreeing for each item. The primary focus on this report will deal with the proportion of each group and total group agreeing with the statement. Thus tabulations and percentages of "strongly agree" and "agree" were combined to enable simpler comparison, highlight consensus and highlight differences between the groups.

Parents' Choice, Rights and Responsibilities

"All parents should have freedom of choice in child caring arrangements." There is considerable consensus among providers, licensing representative, state social services personnel, advocacy/college personnel and parents concerning parents' choice, rights and responsibilities. At least 80.0% of each group feel that parents should have freedom of choice in child caring arrangements. This is inferred to mean that all parents should be able to choose the particular facility and the specific kind of arrangement they feel best for their children.

"Parents have the right and responsibility of rearing their children." At least 80.0% of each group also agree with parents' right and responsibility of rearing their children, with 92.0% of the total sample feeling that way.

"Parents should provide input for policy development of facilities either through suggestion systems or advisory committees." Some 88.0% of the total sample feel that parents should provide input for policy development and facilities either through suggestion systems or advisory committees. Only independent providers and parents who have agreement of 65.2% and 75.8%, respectively, have less than a 90.0% agreement.

"No specific child caring arrangement should be forced upon any family" has a total of 77.3% agreeing. Independent providers, with a 95.6% agreement, feel the strongest. Other non-profit providers agree with a 62.5%.

Aims and Requirements of Day Care Programs

"Day care strengthens and assists the family." At least 69.0% of each group agree with this statement with the exception of the parent group which has a low of 48.2% agreement. State social services personnel have the highest agreement with 87.5%.

"Good day care benefits nearly all children" has strong consensus among all the groups with percentages ranging from 70.0% to 92.5% with a total average agreement of 86.2%.

"Day care should only provide baby sitter service" has virtually no agreement with a total sample of only 4.0% agreeing. The highest agreement is 10.0% for the other non-profit providers.

"All day care programs should include social and cognitive development of young children." There is strong overall consensus on this aim, with a total of 93.3% agreeing. The lowest group is that of advocacy/college personnel with 82.6% agreement. Independent providers are unanimous

"All day care centers should have a lot of toys and equipment to keep children interested and happy" has a total agreement of 79.1% with a low of 61.9% for federally funded providers and a high of 91.3% for advocacy/college personnel.

"Day care staff members need to be trained to be more effective and efficient" has an overall agreement of 95.1%. Advocacy/college personnel provided the low figure of 91.3% while independent providers have a high of 100%.

"Training of and quality of good day care personnel are more important than size of a group for a teacher." Of the total sample, 57.7% agree. Independent providers have an agreement of 91.3%. Federally funded providers have an agreement of 47.6%.

Table 1 - PARENTS' CHOICE, RIGHTS, RESPONSIBILITIES

Item	I Prov.	FF Prov.	NP Prov.	SL Rep.	SS Serv.	Adv/Col	Parent	TOTAL
(1) Freedom of choice for parents	95.6%+	80.9%	80.0%-	85.7%	87.5%	95.6%+	89.6%	87.1%
(3) Parents' rights and responsibilities	100.0%+	80.9%-	90.0%	93.8%	92.5%	100.0%+	86.2%	92.0%
(9) Parent input thru suggestions or committees	65.2%-	90.4%	90.0%	91.8%	100.0%+	95.6%	75.8%	88.4%
(11) No forcing of child caring upon family	95.6%+	66.6%	62.5%-	85.7%	72.5%	78.2%	82.7%	77.3%

I Prov. - Independent Provider
FF Prov. - Federally Funded Provider
NP Prov. - Other Non Profit Provider
SL Rep. - State Licensing Representative
SS Serv. - State Social Services Personnel
Adv/Col - Advocacy or College Personnel
Parent - Day Care or PreSchool Parent
Total - Represents the total sample
+ indicates the highest percentage for an item
- indicates the lowest percentage for an item

Table 2 - AIMS AND REQUIREMENTS OF DAY CARE PROGRAMS

Item	I Prov.	FF Prov.	NP Prov.	SL Rep.	SS Serv.	Adv/Col	Parent	TOTAL
(8) Day care strengthens and assists the family.	82.6%	85.7%	75.0%	69.3%	87.5%+	69.5%	48.2%-	73.7%
(22) Good day care benefits nearly all children.	86.9%	76.1%	70.0%-	83.6%	92.5%+	86.9%	82.7%	82.6%
(17) Day care should only provide baby sitter service.	0.0%-	9.5%	10.0%+	2.0%	2.5%	4.3%	0.0%-	4.0%
(25) All day care programs should include social and cognitive development.	100.0%+	95.2%	92.5%	97.9%	95.0%	82.6%-	86.2%	93.3%
(26) All day care centers should have a lot of toys and equipment.	82.6%	61.9%-	77.5%	81.6%	75.0%	91.3%+	82.7%	79.1%
(27) Day care staff members need to be trained.	100.0%+	95.2%	95.0%	95.9%	95.0%	91.3%-	93.1%	95.1%
(23) Training and quality of teacher more important than group size.	91.3%+	47.6%-	55.0%	53.0%	50.0%	65.2%	55.1%	57.7%
(10) An important aim of preschool is child's adjustment to elementary school.	78.2%	85.7%+	47.5%-	51.0%	62.5%	60.8%	68.9%	61.7%

"An important aim of preschool day care is to facilitate the child's adjustment to elementary school" has a total agreement of 61.7%. The highest agreement is that of federally funded providers with an 85.7%. Other non-profit providers have less than a majority agreeing, with 47.5%. Perhaps this can be explained in that some voluntary providers view this as possible interference, by outsiders, in religious education.

Regulation of Day Care

"The regulation of day care should be the mandate of the states" has a total agreement of 68.4% with independent providers being the strongest advocates with 86.9%. At least 70.0% of state social services personnel, parents and state licensing representatives are in agreement with this statement. The majority of federally funded providers are not in agreement with this statement, however, over 57.0% of the latter do feel that it should be the mandate of the states. The only other category that does not have a majority in agreement is the advocacy/college personnel group with a 47.8%.

"All child care centers should have to meet federal regulations." Only 28.4% of the total sample are in agreement with this option. As would be expected, 76.1% of federally funded providers agree. The advocacy/college group had the lowest percentage with only 8.6% agreeing.

"The Federal government has no business regulating day care" had a total of 24.4% agreeing with this statement. Only independent providers are in strong agreement with a 86.9%.

There is strong consensus that "State licensed child care provides some measure of insuring safety and health of children" with 96.4% concurring. Parents have the lowest percent of agreement with a 86.2%. All independent providers, federally funded providers, and state social services personnel agree.

"Federal regulations increase costs beyond those justified" has 40.4% of the total sample agreeing with this statement. The highest agreement is by independent providers with 86.9%. A majority of persons, 51.7%, agree. The smallest percentage agreeing are the federally funded providers with only 14.2%.

"Federal regulations tend to segregate day care children economically." A total of 54.6% agree with this statement. The highest agreement is that of independent providers with an 86.9%, while the lowest agreement is a 33.3% by federally funded providers. By the way, this does not mean that federally funded providers strongly disagree with this statement. Actually even a smaller percentage disagree with this statement with over half of this specific sample indicating they are not sure or not responding.

"Day care standards should be based upon research and practical economics" has a strong consensus with a total sample percentage of 84.4% agreeing. The highest agreement is that of independent providers with 91.3% and a low percentage of agreement with 67.5% by other non-profit providers. At least 80.0% of all other groups agree.

"Licensing representatives are an important influence on day care" is agreed by 66.2% of the total sample. At least 73.0% of independent providers, state licensing representatives and parents agree with this statement. Federally funded and other non-profit providers and advocacy/college personnel have agreements of 56.0% or 57.0%.

Table 3 - REGULATION OF DAY CARE

Item	I Prov.	FF Prov.	NP Prov.	SL Rep.	SS Serv.	Adv/Col	Parent	TOTAL
(13) Regulation of day care mandate of states.	86.9%+	47.6%-	55.0%	81.6%	72.5%	47.8%	75.8%	68.4%
(6) All child care centers should meet Federal regulations.	13.0%	76.1%+	37.5%	10.2%	27.5%	8.6%-	41.3%	28.4%
(19) The Federal government has no business regulating day care.	86.9%+	9.5%-	20.0%	18.3%	15.0%	13.0%	24.1%	24.4%
(2) State licensed child care insures safety and health of children.	100.0%+	100.0%+	95.0%	97.9%	100.0%+	95.6%	86.2%-	96.4%
(30) Federal regulations increase costs beyond those justified.	86.9%+	14.2%-	22.5%	44.8%	35.0%	34.7%	51.7%	40.4%
(31) Federal regulations tend to segregate day care children economically.	86.9%+	33.3%-	45.0%	57.1%	57.5%	47.8%	55.1%	54.6%
(14) Day care standards should be based upon research and practical economics.	91.3%+	80.9%	67.5%-	89.7%	87.5%	86.9%	89.6%	84.4%
(28) Licensing representatives are an important positive influence on day care.	73.9%	57.1%	57.5%	77.5%+	60.0%	56.5%-	75.8%	66.2%

Economically Disadvantaged Children

"Economically disadvantaged children should not be segregared from other children in day care" has a general consensus of 91.1% with independent providers having the highest agreement and parents having the lowest agreement with 95.6% and 75.8% respectively.

"Economically disadvantaged children need closer supervision in day care" has a total agreement of 24.8% with the highest agreement being that of independent providers with 43.4%. Advocacy/college personnel were in least agreement with an 8.6%.

"The cost of day care for disadvantaged children should be about the same as for that in private day care" has a total agreement of 44.4% with the highest agreement being that of independent providers with 78.2%. The lowest agreement was that of federally funded providers with 28.5%. It is interesting to note that an additional 28.5% of federally funded providers either are not sure or did not answer that question. Other non-profit providers also have as many undecided or not answering as they have agreeing with the statement.

"Public money should be used for preventative health care for all poor children" has a total agreement of 81.7%. State social services personnel have the highest agreement with 92.5%. The lowest agreements are from providers with federally funded providers having 71.4% and independent providers having a 73.9%.

"Public money should be used for all dental and medical care of poor children" has a total agreement of 63.5%. The lowest agreement is that of state licensing representatives with 48.9%. All other groups have at least a majority agreement with both non-profit providers and state social services personnel each having highs of 75.0%.

"Public monies should be used to assist disadvantaged children to the extent that their parents are unable to provide for this care" yields a total agreement of 92.4%. The lowest percent is that of parents with 89.6% while the high is that of state social services personnel with 97.5%.

"Federal staffing standards for day care are too tough" has a total agreement of 44.8%. The range of percentage agreement among the providers is great with 91.3% of the independent providers yielding the high figure and 20.0% and 23.8% of other non-profit and federally funded providers yielding the low figures. State licensing representatives, as might be expected, yielded the next highest percentage agreement on this statement with 63.2%, with an additional 25.0% indicating they aren't too sure. The federally funded and other non-profit providers are nearly evenly divided in the numbers disagreeing and the numbers not sure.

Public Funds for Child Care Age Groups

"Public funds should provide child care for poor: infants under 6 weeks" has a total agreement of 55.5%. Parents feel most strongly on this item with a high of 62%. The lowest percentage of agreement is that of independent providers with a 34.7%. At least a majority of each of the other groups are in agreement with this.

"Public funds should provide child care for poor: 6 weeks to 1 year." Total agreement on this is somewhat higher with 69.3%. State social services personnel have the highest agreement with 85.0%. Independent providers have the lowest agreement with 43.4%. Percentages for all other groups ranged from 61.9% to 73.9%.

Table 4 - ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN

Item	I Prov.	FF Prov.	NP Prov.	SL Rep.	SS Serv.	Adv/Col	Parent	TOTAL
(15) Economically disadvantaged children should not be segregated.	95.6%+	90.4%	95.0%	93.8%	92.5%	91.3%	75.8%-	91.1%
(16) Economically disadvantaged children need closer supervision.	43.4%+	23.8%	20.0%	20.4%	27.5%	8.6%-	34.4%	24.8%
(24) Cost of day care for disadvantaged should be same as for private day care.	78.2%+	28.5%-	35.0%	38.7%	55.0%	34.7%	44.8%	44.4%
(32) Public money used for preventative health care for all poor children.	73.9%	71.4%-	82.5%	83.6%	92.5%+	82.6%	75.8%	81.7%
(36) Public money used for all dental and medical care of poor children.	52.1%	71.4%	75.0%+	48.9%-	75.0%+	65.2%	58.6%	63.5%
(4) Public monies used to assist disadvantaged to extent parents are unable.	91.3%	95.2%	90.0%	91.8%	97.5%+	91.3%	89.6%-	92.4%
(20) Federal staffing standards for day care are too tough.	91.3%+	23.8%	20.0%-	63.2%	37.5%	47.8%	34.4%	44.8%

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Table 5 - PUBLIC FUNDS FOR CHILD CARE AGE GROUPS

Item	I Prov.	FF Prov.	NP Prov.	SL Rep.	SS Serv.	Adv/Col	Parent	TOTAL
(35) Public funds should provide child care for poor:								
infants under 6 weeks	34.7%-	52.3%	57.5%	57.1%	57.5%	60.8%	62.0%+	55.5%
6 weeks to 1 year	43.4%-	61.9%	70.0%	69.3%	85.0%+	73.9%	68.9%	69.3%
1 year to 2 years	52.1%-	76.1%	70.0%	75.5%	87.5%+	73.9%	72.4%	73.7%
2 years - school age	65.2%-	90.4%	82.5%	71.4%	92.5%+	86.9%	75.8%	80.4%
school age	47.8%-	71.4%	82.5%	71.4%	85.0%+	78.2%	68.9%	73.7%

"Public funds should provide child care for poor: 1 to 2 years." A total of 73.7% agree. Again the state social services personnel yield the highest agreement with 87.5%. The lowest agreement is by independent providers with 52.1%. All other categories have at least a 70.0% agreement.

"Public funds should provide child care for poor: 2 years to school age" has a total agreement of 80.4%. The highs and lows are again provided by state social services personnel and independent providers with 92.5% and 65.2%, respectively.

"Public funds should provide child care for poor: school age " has a total agreement of 73.7%. State social services personnel have the highest agreement with 85.0%, while independent providers have an agreement of 47.8%.

At least a majority of all groups with the exception of the independent providers feel that public funds should be provided for poor children of any age. A majority of independent providers feel that child care should be provided for two years of age through school age, as well as for one-year-olds. Less than a majority of independent providers feel that it should be provided for school age children and children under one year of age. The strongest consensus on use of public funds for poor children is for preschoolers of at least two years of age. Agreement is fairly strong for one-year-olds and school age children. At least a majority are in favor of providing care for infants, even those under six weeks of age.

Community Services and Expenditures

"Agencies and operators have a responsibility for expending public funds efficiently" has a total agreement of 95.1%. State social services personnel agree 100.0% for the high figure with 90.4% of federally funded providers providing the low figure.

"Health and social services should be on voluntary basis for all children" has a total agreement of 55.1%. Both federally funded and other non-profit providers have less than a majority agreement on this statement with 42.8% and 47.5%, respectively.

"Volunteers could be of considerable assistance to day care facilities" has a total percentage agreement of 85.4%. All federally funded and other non-profit providers agree. Independent providers have a low of 69.2% with parents being just a little higher.

"The community should provide social, health and prescreening services for young children" has a total agreement of 80.0%. Advocacy/college personnel has the highest agreement with 91.3%, while parents provide the lowest agreement with 68.9%. Independent providers are less than one percentage point higher than parents.

"Public monies should be used to help provide training for all day care personnel" has a total agreement of 66.6%, the high and low percentage agreements are those of state social services personnel and independent providers with 80.0% and 43.4%, respectively.

"State regulations of day care reflect the economic, political and resource reality unique to a state" has a total sample agreement of 57.7%. Independent providers reflect the strongest agreement with this statement with 78.9%. Neither federally funded providers nor other non-profit providers have a majority in agreement with this statement, 38.0% and 42.5%, respectively.

Table 6 - COMMUNITY SERVICES AND EXPENDITURES

Item	I Prov.	FF Prov.	NP Prov.	SL Rep.	SS Serv.	Adv/Col	Parent	TOTAL
(12) Agencies and operators responsible for expending public funds efficiently.	95.6%	90.4%-	95.0%	95.9%	100.0%+	91.3%	93.1%	95.1%
(37) Health and social services on voluntary basis for all children.	56.5%	42.8%-	47.5%	59.1%	55.0%	65.2%+	58.6%	55.1%
(38) Volunteers could be of considerable assistance to day care facilities.	69.2%-	100.0%+	100.0%+	87.8%	89.1%	85.7%	71.4%	85.4%
(5) The community should provide social, health and prescreening services.	69.5%	76.1%	87.5%	77.5%	85.0%	91.3%+	68.9%-	80.0%
(21) Public monies should be used to help provide training for all day care personnel.	43.4%-	76.1%	70.0%	65.3%	80.0%+	73.9%	51.7%	66.6%
(29) State regulations of day care reflect the economic, political and resource reality unique to a state.	78.9%+	38.0%-	42.5%	71.4%	52.5%	65.2%	55.1%	57.7%
(7) Most people are willing to pay higher taxes to support free day care.	0.0%-	19.0%+	12.5%	4.0%	2.5%	0.0%-	3.4%	5.7%

"Most people are willing to pay higher taxes to support free day care" has a total percentage agreement of only 5.7%. No independent providers or advocacy/college personnel are in agreement with this statement. The highest agreement is that of federally funded providers with 19.0%.

Other Information and Requirements

"The number of children per teacher in day care required by federal standards has been demonstrated by relevant research" has only a 14.6% total agreement. The highest percentage agreeing with this statement is that of federally funded providers with a 28.5%.

"Working mothers subsidize over 80% of licensed day care" has a total agreement of 43.1%. The highest agreement is that of independent providers with 69.5%. All other percentages range from 35.0% to 42.8%. Apparently less than a majority of most of the groups are aware that working mothers are paying for most of the licensed child care. It is conceivable that many individuals feel that licensed child care is primarily subsidized with federal and state funds.

"Most preschool child care is informal or unlicensed" has a total agreement of 45.7%. Independent providers have the highest agreement with 65.2% while parents have the lowest agreement with 27.5%. Only state licensing representatives and advocacy/college personnel have a majority of their groups agreeing to this statement. Apparently most individuals feel that the great majority of child care is that which takes place in licensed or registered facilities such as day care centers, group and family day homes.

VI. Summary and Conclusions

All studies, regardless of how carefully they are conducted, have limitations. In the present study we are well aware of a number of sample biases. Nonetheless, the best that could be done under the circumstances was to categorize individual respondents into various groups and to define each group in terms of the demographic data, as was done in this paper. The conclusions that can be reached from this study follow.

1. There is strong consensus among all groups in terms of parents' choice, rights and responsibilities.

a) All parents should have freedom in child caring arrangements.
b) Parents have the right and responsibility of rearing children.
c) Parents should have input for policy development of facilities.
d) No specific child care arrangement should be forced upon a family.

2. There is strong consensus on some of the aims and requirements of day care programs.

a) Good day care benefits nearly all children.
b) Programs should include social and cognitive development.
c) Centers should have lots of toys and equipment.
d) Staff members need to be trained to be more effective and efficient.
e) Day care should not merely provide baby sitter service.

3 While there is majority agreement on some other aims and requirements of day care programs, there are great group differences in terms of agreement on the following:

Table 7 - OTHER INFORMATION AND REQUIREMENTS

Item	I Prov.	FF Prov.	NP Prov.	SL Rep.	SS Serv.	Adv/Col	Parent	TOTAL
(18) Number of children per teacher required by Federal day care standards has been demonstrated by relevant research.	13.0%	28.5%+	15.0%	8.1%-	20.0%	13.0%	10.3%	14.6%
(33) Working mothers subsidize over 80% of licensed day care.	69.5%+	38.0%	42.5%	42.8%	35.0%-	39.1%	41.3%	43.1%
(34) Most preschool child care is informal or unlicensed.	65.2%+	28.5%	45.0%	57.1%	40.0%	52.1%	27.5%-	45.7%

a) At least 69.0% of each group felt that day care strengthens and assists the family with the exception of parents whose agreement was less than a majority.

b) The range for agreement on quality and training of personnel being more important than group size was from 47.6% for federally funded providers to 91.3% for independent providers.

c) A majority of all groups except non-profit providers viewed child's adjustment to elementary school as an important aim (non-profit providers - 47.5% versus 85.7% for federally funded providers).

4. Regulation of day care. There is fairly strong consensus on the following aspects:

a) State licensed child care provides some measure of insuring safety and health of children.

b) Day care standards should be based upon research and practical economics.

c) Licensing representatives are an important influence on day care.

5. There are considerable differences of opinion on the federal state roles of day care.

a) At least a majority of five groups and the total sample feel that day care regulation should be the mandate of the states. Slightly less than half of the federally funded providers and advocacy/college personnel agree with this position.

b) With the exception of federally funded providers, relatively few feel that all child care centers should have to meet federal requirements.

c) With the exception of independent providers, relatively few feel that the federal government has no business regulating day care.

6. There is considerable variation among the groups in terms of the effects of federal regulations.

a) Only independent providers have high consensus (86.9%) that federal regulations increase costs beyond those justified. To the other extreme, only 14.2% of federally funded and 22.5% of other non-profit providers concur with this.

b) At least a majority of four of the seven groups feel that federal regulations tend to segregate children economically (the extremes are represented by independent providers with 86.9% and federally funded providers with 33.3%).

7. Economically disadvantaged children. There is strong consensus among all groups regarding economically disadvantaged children.

a) They should not be segregated.
b) They do not need closer supervision.
c) Public money should be used for preventative health care.
d) Public money should be used to assist them to the extent that their parents are unable to do so.

8. There are considerable differences of opinion concerning disadvantaged children concerning dental and medical care, cost of care, and federal staffing standards.

a) At least a majority of six of seven groups feel that public money should be used for all dental and medical care of poor children.

b) Those agreeing that federal staffing standards for day care are too tough range from 91.3% for independent providers to 20.0% for other non-profit providers, with 44.8% of the total group agreeing.

c) The range of agreement on the cost of day care for disadvantaged children range from 78.2% for independent providers to 28.5% for federally funded providers, with a total agreement of 44.4%.

9. Public funds for child care for the poor.

a) There is strong consensus that public funds should provide child care for poor preschoolers beginning with one year of age.

b) While less than a majority of independent providers agree, at least 61.9% of each of the other groups feel that child care for poor children six weeks to one year of age and school age children should be paid for by public funds.

c) Agreement for providing child care for poor infants under six weeks of age is not overwhelming. Six of the seven groups have majority agreement with independent providers and parents yielding extreme figures with 34.7% and 62.0%, respectively.

10. Community services and expenditures. There is strong consensus among all groups that:

a) agencies and operators have a responsibility for expending public funds efficiently;

b) that volunteers could be of considerable assistance to day care facilities;

c) that the community should provide social, health and prescreening services for young children.

d) People are not willing to pay higher taxes to support free day care.

11. Most groups favor using public monies to help provide training for all day care personnel.

12. While a majority agree that state regulations of day care reflect the economic and political resource reality unique to a state, less than a majority of federally funded and other non-profit providers agree.

13. Few of any group feel that the number of children per teacher in day care required by federal standards has been demonstrated by relevant research.

14. Less than a majority realize that working mothers subsidize most of licensed day care and that most preschool child care is informal or unlicensed.

VII. Recommendations

In the development of legislation, policy and regulations, it is recommended

1. that all parents be given freedom of choice in selecting child caring arrangements and child caring facilities;

2. that parents be allowed input into policy development of facilities either through suggestion systems or through advisory committees;

3. that social and cognitive development of children not be made an optional requirement;

4. centers should be required to have sufficient toys and equipment;

5. child care staff members be required to attend a minimum number of training sessions or workshops per year;

6. that all group day care and day care centers be required to be state licensed;

7. that all federal and state day care standards be based upon research and practical economics;

8. that there should be strong encouragement for the development of policies that do not lead to the segregation of economically disadvantaged centers;

9. that public money be used for preventative health care as well as dental and health care for poor children;

10. that public monies be used to assist economically disadvantaged children to the extent that their parents are unable to do so;

11. that agencies and operators be given responsibility for utilizing community resources before expending state and federal funds;

12. that communities be given the responsibility to provide social, health and prescreening services for young children; and that

13. public monies be used to help provide training for all day care personnel.